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RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RHMFIUU/AMEMBASSY DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHINGTON DC
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HAMBURG 000052

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/AGS, EUR/PPD, L/LEI, AND S/CT.
JUSTICE FOR BARBARA BERMAN AND PATRICIA REEDY.
SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: AL QAEDA ACCOMPLICE AWAITING TRIAL IN SCHLESWIG, GERMANY

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¶1. (U) SUMMARY: After German Police arrested Redouane El-Habhab July 6, 2006 at the Hamburg Dammtor train station, the Federal Prosecutor charged him April 25, 2007 with nine counts of supporting the foreign terrorist organizations Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda in Iraq as well as four counts of acting against the German Foreign Trade Law between August 2005 and July 2006. Prosecutors also charged him with founding a terrorist organization abroad. Schleswig-Holstein's Higher Appellate Court in Schleswig has announced that the trial is scheduled to begin July 18, however the court's spokesperson has informed post that due to elevated security arrangements hearings are not expected to begin until July 25. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Redouane El-Habhab (37) is a dual German and Moroccan national. Between 1996 and 2004 he was a student at Kiel's Christian Albrechts University. Prosecutors suspect him of attending an explosives-making camp in Algeria in November 2005. In 2006 he opened an internet cafe and call center on Iltis Street in Kiel's Garden District. Federal police arrested him July 6, 2006 at the Hamburg Dammtor train station on a warrant issued by the Federal Prosecutor's Office based on incriminating online chat room activity German authorities had observed which suggested that El-Habhab was relaying news between fugitive 9/11 planner Said Bahaji and his now former wife, who was then still living in Hamburg. Law enforcement officials concluded Bahaji would only give this important task to a trusted Al-Qaeda member and therefore El-Habhab must be a member of the terrorist organization. He is not accused of planning or preparing attacks within Germany. Initial news reports suggested that El-Habhab may have had connections to the August 2006 "suitcase bomber" Youssuf Al Haijib, who was also a Kiel resident. Later, however, police concluded there was no clear link between the two.

¶3. (SBU) The Federal Prosecutor's Office has accused El-Habhab of nine independent acts of supporting the foreign terrorist organizations Al-Qaeda and Al-Qaeda in Iraq as well as four counts of acting against the Foreign Trade Law between August 2005 and July 2006. Prosecutors also charged him with founding a terrorist organization abroad.

Four Counts Against the Foreign Trade Law

¶4. (SBU) The Prosecutor's Office asserts El-Habhab transferred money (5000 Euro total) on four occasions to Egypt and Syria for equipping "God's Fighters," financing the participation in an explosives training course, and paying off a smuggler. These

four charges are also part of the nine counts of supporting the terrorist activities of terrorist organization. Furthermore, they broke the UN Security Council and EU embargos.

Five Additional Counts of Supporting a Terrorist Organization

¶5. (SBU) The Prosecutor's Office asserts that in August 2005 El-Habhab pledged an oath of loyalty to Mullah Omar over the internet in which El-Habhab declared that he was ready to provide fighters and financial resources to the "community." According to the Prosecutor's Office, Osama bin Laden empowered Mullah Omar to accept such oaths. El-Habhab is accused of supporting Al-Qaeda in Iraq in four more counts by arranging for Jihad Fighters from Morocco and Egypt from May through July ¶2006. the prosecutor states that he provided financial resources for transfers, provided logistical support through smuggling, and offered financial help, .

One Count of Co- Founding a Terrorist Organization Abroad

¶6. (SBU) The Federal Prosecutor's Office has also accused El-Habhab of co-founding a terrorist organization abroad with four other people in June and July of 2006. The Prosecutor's Office states that the organization's goal was to build a front against the "Crusaders" in Sudan and to answer Osama bin Laden's call for holy war by committing serious criminal acts. The founding members intended to divide their work, with El-Habhab given the responsibility to procure information, clarify technical options, and recruit trainers and others. The Prosecutor also accuses El-Habhab of being involved in financing the group. (Note: One additional founding member and a supporter of the organization were recently extradited from Sweden to stand trial in Germany. Thaer Alhalah, a Jordanian national, and Moroccan Abdelali Miftah were extradited on April 4 and May 15, respectively. The Federal Prosecutor's Office

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issued their arrest warrants based on evidence found during police observation of El-Habhab's internet chat sessions; however their investigations are independent of the El-Habhab case. The prosecutor accuses Alhalah of co-founding the organization and Miftah is accused of assisting in its foundation. End Note.)

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: Post expects the case to draw wide-spread public attention and, as has been seen at similar trials in Germany, that the court will undertake significant security measures. Security concerns have already caused the court to delay the beginning of the trial until July 25. END COMMENT.
BUTCHER